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Distributed by the NH Health Alert Network
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NH-HAN 20200722



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak, Update # 19

Key Points and Recommendations:

- New Hampshire's COVID-19 [General Travel and Quarantine Guidance](#) has been updated, including employer screening and exclusion criteria.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated their guidance for [discontinuation of isolation for persons with COVID-19 not in healthcare settings](#).
- The CDC has updated their guidance for [discontinuation of transmission-based precautions in healthcare settings](#).
- For patients with [mild to moderate illness](#), home isolation or transmission-based precautions for hospitalized patients can be discontinued when the person has met all criteria of the "symptom-based strategy":
 1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first started, **AND**
 2. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (off any fever-reducing medications), **AND**
 3. Symptoms have improved
 - [Asymptomatic](#) patients who test positive can discontinue home isolation 10 days after their initial positive diagnostic test (assuming person remains asymptomatic)
- For patients with [severe to critical illness](#), or who are [severely immunocompromised](#), transmission-based precautions can be discontinued when the patient has met all the following criteria:
 1. At least 20 days have passed since symptoms first started, **AND**
 2. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (off any fever-reducing medications), **AND**
 3. Symptoms have improved
 - [Asymptomatic](#) severely immunocompromised patients who test positive can have transmission-based precautions discontinued 20 days after their initial positive diagnostic test (assuming person remains asymptomatic)
- The summary of the [current evidence and rationale](#) for CDC's changes to their isolation and transmission-based precautions recommendations has been updated.
 - Recovered patients can continue to shed PCR-detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA in upper respiratory tract specimens up to 3 months after initial infection without evidence of the person being infectious (i.e., likely dead virus being detected).
 - For patients with mild to moderate COVID-19, replication-competent virus (i.e., infectious virus) has not been recovered after 10 days following symptom onset.

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- For some patients with severe to critical illness (including immunocompromised patients), replication-competent virus has been recovered between 10-20 days after illness onset.
 - The duration of a person's immunity after infection and ability for re-infection is still being studied; however, [CDC has not identified any cases of confirmed SARS-CoV-2 re-infection](#) to date. Other related beta-coronavirus infections, however, do not produce long-lasting immunity and people appear to become susceptible as early as 90 days after onset of infection. Therefore:
 - For persons who remain asymptomatic following recovery from COVID-19, retesting is not recommended within the first 3 months after the date of symptom onset for most recent COVID-19 illness.
 - For persons who develop new symptoms **within the first 3 months** after the date of symptom onset for the most recent COVID-19 illness, providers should take appropriate COVID-19 transmission-based precautions, consider re-testing for COVID-19, and work-up patient for alternative etiologies. If alternative etiologies for illness cannot be identified, repeat isolation and contact tracing may be needed if patient tests positive for COVID-19.
 - Persons who develop new symptoms **more than 3 months** after the date of symptom onset for the most recent COVID-19 illness should be re-tested, and those who test positive should be considered infectious and undergo repeat isolation.
 - See CDC [Infection Control FAQs](#) for more information.
 - As previously recommended, providers should continue to test any patient presenting with even mild [symptoms of COVID-19](#) using a PCR-based test; these patients should be instructed to isolate pending test results. We also recommend PCR testing for close contacts of people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in order to detect asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic infection.
 - Close contacts of people with COVID-19 still need to quarantine for 14 days after their last exposure, regardless of whether or not a person is tested.
 - Patients can access COVID-19 testing through a variety of [specimen collection sites](#) in NH.
 - Providers should be aware that currently available point-of-care COVID-19 testing platforms – both PCR-based tests (e.g., Abbott ID NOW) and antigen-based tests (e.g., Quidel, BD Veritor) – have lower test sensitivity:
 - Point-of-care tests are most helpful if positive. Negative test results should be considered “presumptive negative” and should be confirmed with another lab-based PCR test with higher sensitivity.
 - See the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) [Considerations for Implementation of SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Antigen Testing](#).
 - See prior NH [HAN, Update #18](#) for current personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations, which have not changed.

Communication and Partner Engagement:

- In partnership with the New Hampshire Health Care Association, we continue to have weekly calls every **Wednesday** from **12:00 – 1:00 pm** for long-term care facilities (LTCFs) and other congregate living settings:
 - Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/511075725>
 - Call-in phone number: (929) 205-6099
 - Meeting ID: 511 075 725
- We continue to host weekly calls every **Thursday** from **12:00 – 1:00 pm** for healthcare providers and local partners:
 - Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/s/94841259025>
 - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
 - Meeting ID: 948 4125 9025
 - Password: 003270
- We will begin hosting a **new regularly scheduled call for school nurses** (grades K-12) to address concerns and answering questions related to school re-opening. Calls will be every **Friday** from **12:00 – 1:00 pm** (first call will be Friday 7/24):
 - Zoom link: <https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/j/98062195081>
 - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
 - Meeting ID: 980 6219 5081
 - Passcode: 197445

Reporting:

- Providers and laboratories should continue to submit a completed [COVID-19 Case Report Form](#) to NH DPHS for the following people:
 - Any new COVID-19 laboratory positive test regardless of test type (e.g. PCR, antibody, etc.).
 - Any new laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalization, even if the patient was a previously reported positive as an outpatient.
 - Any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 death.

Current Global and U.S. COVID-19 Epidemiology:

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Current New Hampshire Epidemiology:

<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/dashboard/summary.htm> (Note: data dashboard will be updated in the next week to display additional information relevant to tracking the epidemic in NH)

Additional Resources:

- NH DHHS COVID-19 website: <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>
- CDC COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - CDC Information for Healthcare Professionals:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>
- World Health Organization COVID-19 website:
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

- For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.
- To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, please send an email to DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov.

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From: Benjamin P. Chan, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist
Originating Agency: NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services

Attachments: None